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Remarks

In response to the Office Action mailed November 5, 2004 Applicant respectfully requests reexamination, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-7, 9, 11-20, 22-33, and 35-36 in view of the following amendments and remarks.

The Examiner has first rejected claims 1-5, 11-13, 16-19, 27 and 33-37 under 35 USC §102(b) as anticipated by Inoue, U.S. Patent No. 5,706,570. The Examiner has characterized Inoue as disclosing a feed path along a Y-direction at the end of which a connector is reoriented 90 degrees, a guide path with opposing walls having an entry section prior to crimping, a one-way feed assembly, a reciprocating press, a linkage, a wire guide, a strip separator, a fed pawl (connected by the linkage), and a twist section.

The Examiner has next rejected claim 6 under 35 USC §103(a) as unpatentable over Inoue in view of Tillotson, U.S. Patent No. 5,799,391 describing Tillotson as disclosing a plurality of asymmetrical teeth, and modifying the crimper of Inoue by adding these asymmetrical teeth

Next, the Examiner has rejected claims 8-9, 20-26 and 28-32 under 35 USC §103(a) as unpatentable over Inoue in view of Ooji et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,530,257, stating the Ooji discloses a brake biased toward the conveyance path to prevent lateral movement of the connectors and that is would have been obvious to one of skill in the art to make this modification.

Last, the Examiner has rejected claims 14-15 under 35 USC §103(a) as unpatentable over Inoue in view of Erhard et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,704,110 characterizing Erhard as disclosing an adjustable trimmer.

The Examiner has further indicated that claim 10 contains allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form.

Applicant takes issue with the Examiner's characterization of the cited patents, and specifically, with the application of these patents to the present invention.

As defined in claim 1 (which has been amended to include the elements of claims 8 and 10), the present invention is directed to a press apparatus for pressing a wire into an associated connector. The connector for use with the press is carried on an elongated strip and has an opening at a top and is stored on the strip in a side-ways orientation. The connector is fed into

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the press on the strip.

The press includes a feed path a reorienting section adapted to receive the connector on the strip in the side-ways orientation and to reorient the connector to position the opening of the connector in an upward orientation. Applicant submits that the Inoue patent does not disclose this reorienting arrangement (nor does any of the other art of record).

The press further includes a guide portion (having opposing walls) that defines a conveyance path and a conveyance direction for the connector. A one-way feed assembly feeds the connector in the conveyance direction and prevents reverse movement of the connector opposite the feed direction. Again, this one-way feed arrangement is not specifically disclosed in Inoue. Rather, it is Applicant's position that the Examiner is reading this element (both structurally and functionally) into the Inoue patent. The feed assembly of the present press apparatus further includes a retaining portion and a feed portion disposed opposite the retaining portion.

A reciprocating press has a die operably connected thereto that is configured to reciprocate to move the die to press the wire into the connector when the wire is positioned above the connector opening. A linkage operably connects the feed assembly and the reciprocating press. In this arrangement, movement of the reciprocating press advances the connector along the conveyance path to position the connector opening below the die for pressing a wire into the opening.

The press further includes a brake assembly having a plurality of teeth for releasably securing the connector in place under the die.

Applicant submits that this structure is simply not disclosed in the Inoue patent nor in the other references of record. Specifically, as noted above, the references of record do not disclose the reorienting arrangement (to reorient the connectors from the horizontal to the vertical), nor do they disclose, explicitly, the one-way feed assembly that feeds the connector in the conveyance direction and prevents reverse movement of the connector opposite the feed direction. As such, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 and the claims dependent upon claim 1 (claims 2-7, 9 and 11-19) are allowable over the art or record and respectfully and earnestly solicits indication of same.

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As to claim 20 and the claims dependent upon claim 20 (claims 22-26), Applicant has amended claim 20 to more specifically define the invention as a press apparatus having a feed path having a twisted section (again, there is nothing in the art of record that specifically discloses this configuration) adapted to receive the connector on the strip in the side-ways orientation and to rotate the connector to position the opening of the connector in an upward orientation, a guide portion defining a conveyance path and direction for the connector, means for one-way feeding the connector in the conveyance direction, means for preventing reverse movement of the connector in a direction opposite the conveyance direction and means for laterally restraining movement of the connectors. This configuration effectively confines the connector as the wire is pressed into the connector which, applicant submits is not expressly called out in any of the references of record.

As further defined by claim 20, the press apparatus includes a reciprocating press having a die operably connected that is configured to reciprocate to move the die to press the wire into the connector when the wire is positioned above the connector opening. The press further includes means operably connecting the one-way feed means and the reciprocating press.

As set forth in amended claim 27 (and the claims depending therefrom), the press includes a chute defining a feed path for receiving the connector on the strip in the side-ways orientation and reorienting the connector to position the opening of the connector in an upward orientation. The chute has a twist section (again, not specifically disclosed in any of the art of record) to reorient the connectors from an orientation in which the opening is horizontal to an orientation in which the opening is vertical. The press further includes a one-way feed assembly to feed the connector in the conveyance direction and to prevent reverse movement of the connector opposite the feed direction. The feed assembly includes a retaining portion and a feed portion opposite the retaining portion.

A wire guide positions the wire above the connector opening and the reciprocating press reciprocates to move the die to press the wire into the connector when the wire is positioned above the connector opening. A linkage operably connects the feed assembly and the press such that movement of the press advances the connector along the conveyance path to position the connector opening below the die for pressing a wire into the opening. A strip separator is disposed

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downstream of the reciprocating press for separating the connector from the strip.

Again, it is applicant's position that this recited structure is not disclosed in the art of record. That is, none of the cited references disclose the twist section for reorienting the connectors from the horizontal the vertical, nor the a one-way feed assembly to feed the connector in the conveyance direction and to prevent reverse movement of the connector opposite the feed direction.

As such, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the pending rejections and allow claims 1-7, 9, 11-20, 22-33 and 35-36 as amended.

The Examiner has also indicated that Applicant should provide reference numerals for the claimed limitations either in parenthetical format or in tabular form in the remarks section as well as support in the specification for any claim amendments.

As to the reference numerals, applicant submits that this European style claim format is not required under U.S. practice. Specifically, MPEP 608.01 does not require these parenthetical reference numerals. Rather, it is optional on the part of Applicant: "[r]eference characters corresponding to elements recited in the detailed description and the drawings *may* be used in conjunction with the recitation of the same element or group of elements in the claims". MPEP 608.01, emphasis added.

Applicant does not believe that the reference numerals are required, and submits that use of reference numeral may unnecessarily limit the scope of the claims. However, should the Examiner believe that there is some reason for inclusion, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

As to support in the specification for each of the claim amendments, each of these amendments only further defines the claims by the addition of elements originally set forth in dependent claims. As such, by virtue of the originally filed claims constituting a part of the disclosure, the claims amendments are supported by the original disclosure.

A Petition for a one month extension of time is submitted herewith, along with an authorization to charge Deposit Account 23-0920. Applicant believes that there are no additional fees due in connection with the present amendment. If, however, there are additional a fees due, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit

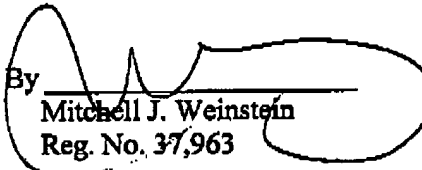
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Account No.23-0920. Should additional petitions be necessary, it is respectfully requested that this paper constitute any such petitions.

Should the Examiner believe that a telephone interview would expedite prosecution and allowance of the present application, or address any outstanding formal issues, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,  
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By   
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**February 8, 2005**  
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